

OVERVIEW OF THE CANADA SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICE INVOLVEMENT FOR THE PUBLIC ORDER EMERGENCY COMMISSION

1.0 DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Canada Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS) is a civilian security intelligence service mandated under s. 12 of the *CSIS Act* to investigate, analyze and report to the Government of Canada on threats to the security of Canada, which are defined as espionage and sabotage, foreign-influenced activities, terrorism and violent extremism, and subversion. CSIS also has the mandate to take measures to reduce these threats in certain circumstances.

The definition of “threats to the security of Canada” specifically excludes lawful advocacy, protest or dissent, unless carried on in conjunction with any of the activities constituting threats to the security of Canada.

CSIS’ mandate under s. 12 is engaged when there are reasonable grounds to suspect that activities constitute a threat to the security of Canada.

CSIS works pro-actively with domestic partners to align operational efforts and seek solutions in the interest of public safety. CSIS shares threat-related information within the Government of Canada in order to mitigate risks to public safety.

In addition, CSIS works closely with its domestic and international partners on understanding the evolution of the threat environment so that it is positioned to provide assessments and advice to support actions, including by law enforcement where appropriate.

CSIS’ authorities are contained in the *CSIS Act*. CSIS does not rely on any powers outside of its act.

The Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre (ITAC) is a federal organization responsible for producing integrated all-source assessments of terrorism-related threats to Canada and Canadian interests. It is co-located within CSIS headquarters and operates under the provisions and authorities of the *CSIS Act*. ITAC’s products are widely shared with intelligence and law enforcement partners, as well as with senior decision makers to support their decision making.

2.0 POTENTIAL AREAS OF INTEREST FOR THE INQUIRY

CSIS can provide information to the Commission on the following areas related to its mandate:

A. Investigation of Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism (IMVE)

CSIS takes very seriously the threats posed by individuals who engage in ideologically motivated violent extremism. Over the last few years, CSIS has increased resources dedicated to investigating

and analyzing IMVE threats. CSIS' understanding of the IMVE milieu has informed advice to Government.

IMVE is often driven by a range of grievances and ideas from across the ideological spectrum. The resulting worldview consists of a personalized narrative which centres on an extremist's willingness to incite, enable and / or mobilize to violence. Extremists draw inspiration from a variety of sources including books, images, lectures, music, online discussions, videos and conversations.

CSIS's investigative activities focus on the identification of individuals and groups presenting threat behavior and mindset supportive of the threat or use of serious violence to achieve an ideological purpose as per section 2(c) of the *CSIS Act*. The nexus to the threat or use of violence to achieve societal change is a key threshold consideration underpinning all Service investigative activities. The space below this threshold is vast and represents a fertile ground for radicalization for more extreme ideologies.

CSIS has been a leader in the Security and Intelligence community on understanding the IMVE threat. It has worked with departments and agencies across the Government of Canada and law enforcement to develop common language and terminology on IMVE that has been adopted by international partners.

CSIS monitors and investigates the evolving threat posed by ideologically motivated violent extremists and can take threat reduction measures where appropriate.

ITAC has analyzed the trajectory of the IMVE threat in Canada and abroad over the years, with specific focus on watershed events such as the 2017 attack at a mosque in Quebec City, the listing of IMVE groups as terrorist entities under the Criminal Code, and the 2021 attack on Muslim family in London, Ontario. Between 2017 and 2022, ITAC has mapped out and assessed the ideologies, sources of inspiration, related entities, their international connections, techniques and critical incidents relating to the rise of IMVE as a serious terrorism phenomenon.

Beyond IMVE-related threats of serious violence, ITAC's assessments over the past year have also highlighted IMVE-related threats and violent rhetoric directed at politicians and public figures, as well as the impact on societal resilience of the apparent normalization of the use of violent rhetoric and the threatening of violence as a means to express dissent. All these elements are regularly taken into account as part of the analysis that supports the National Terrorism Threat Level (NTTL). It is important to note, however, that while the Canadian terrorism landscape is fluid, the NTTL has remained at MEDIUM.

B. Occupation and blockades

CSIS can provide information to the Commission about how CSIS assessed the threat in relation to the occupation and blockades and its investigative activities.

The occupation and blockades themselves and the vast majority of participants were not relevant to CSIS' mandate. CSIS' efforts focused on its IMVE subjects of investigation and their activities in relation to those events.

What began as legitimate protest, based on pandemic-related grievances, grew organically and was encouraged by heated rhetoric. CSIS was aware of the opportunity that a large gathering and anti-government protests could offer IMVE actors seeking to recruit like-minded individuals and carry out violence.

CSIS assessed the occupation and blockades in the broader context of rising anti-public health measure movements, which were not a homogenous group, but when combined with ever-increasing influence of social media and disruptive elements of the pandemic, created an environment ripe for exploitations by influencers and extremists to commit serious acts of violence.

Given this trend, CSIS closely monitored the opportunities the occupation and blockades may have presented to IMVE actors to promote or engage in serious acts of violence in Canada. CSIS was also aware that the occupation and blockades may have offered opportunities to lone wolf actors.

C. Assessment of IMVE threat post-invocation of *Emergency Measures Act*

CSIS can also provide information to the Commission about its assessment of the IMVE threat landscape after the declaration of the public order emergency.

CSIS assessed that the invocation of the *Emergencies Act* could have negatively influenced the behaviors of CSIS' subjects of investigations and others who may not have yet embarked on a path to radicalization.

CSIS further assessed that some individuals involved in IMVE movements were likely to view the announcement relating to the invocation of the *Emergencies Act* as confirmation of their core beliefs. This, in turn, could lead to increased volume of extreme online chatter and would likely further their radicalization pathways towards violence.

CSIS remained alive to these different scenarios and maintained awareness of the unfolding situation. It used all the authorities and tools at its disposal to investigate and assess threats to the security of Canada to provide advice to Government and where appropriate consider the use of threat reduction measures.

D. Assessment of foreign interference in relation to the occupation and blockades

CSIS can provide information to the Commission about foreign interference in relation to the occupation and blockades.

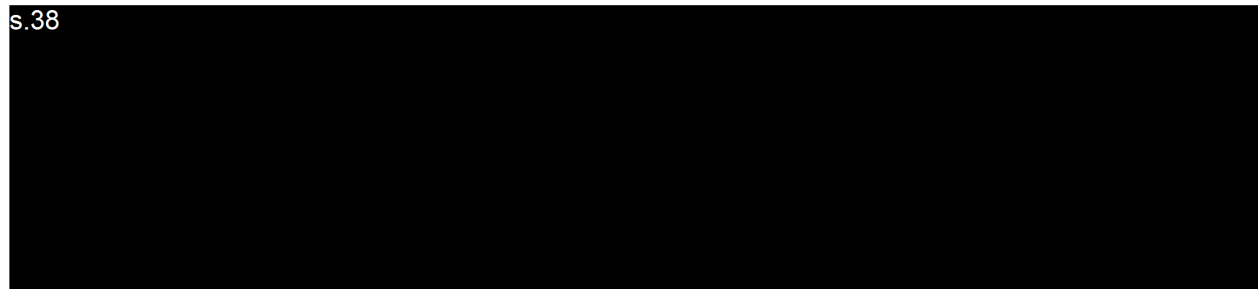
With respect to foreign sources of funding, CSIS' mandate is engaged when funds are provided at the direction of a foreign state with the goal of engaging in foreign interference activities in Canada, or when those donating the money are doing so to support an act of serious violence or terrorism.

CSIS did not observe such activities in relation to the occupation and blockades.

E. Receipt of information under the Emergency Economic Measures Order (EEMO)

CSIS can provide information to the Commission about information it received under the EEMO.

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3.0 DOCUMENT HOLDINGS

Subject to applicable privileges, including Cabinet Confidence, CSIS's document holdings include the following:

- CSIS and ITAC assessments in relation to IMVE including analytical assessments pertaining to Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism (IMVE) and describing individuals, groups, threats, trends, movements, examples, status, imagery, motivations, implications, etc.
- CSIS and ITAC assessments including analytical assessments pertaining to the occupation and blockades and/or similar events and describing individuals, groups, threats, trends, movements, examples, status, imagery, motivations, implications, etc.
- CSIS operational reporting including tactical threat-related operational reporting s.38
s.38 on CSIS subjects of investigation which also make reference to the occupation and blockades and/or similar events. Such reports informed CSIS and ITAC assessments.
- Internal CSIS communications which reference the occupation and blockades.